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Claims

1. Method for mapping a hierarchical data format comprising descriptors (1, 10, 11) to a relational database management system, **characterized in that** the method comprises the steps of:
separating the descriptors (1, 10, 11) into portions of a common format, and;
storing the portions of a common format in relations (20, 21, 22...) in the relational database.

2. Method according to claim 1, **further comprising** the step of providing independent relations (22, 23,...,32, 33,...) for the common formats.

3. Method according to claim 1 or 2, **further comprising** the step of storing information allowing recovery of the descriptor structure in the relations (20, 21, 22...).

4. Method according to claim 3, **characterized in that** the information allowing recovery of the descriptor structure comprises descriptor numbers and relative and/or absolute positions of portions of a common format within the descriptors (1, 10, 11).

5. Method according to claim 4, **characterized in that** the information allowing recovery of the descriptor structure further comprises an indicator for the next upper hierarchical level of the portions of a common format within the descriptors (1, 10, 11).

6. Method according to claim 4 or 5, **further comprising** the step of storing a descriptor index (40) in the relational database.

7. Method according to claim 6, **characterized in that** the descriptor index (40) comprises at least descriptor numbers, absolute positions of the descriptors (1, 10, 11) within the

relations (20, 21, 22...) and/or unique identifiers (4) for the descriptors (1, 10, 11).

8. Method according to anyone of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** the hierarchical data format comprising descriptors (1, 10, 11) corresponds to the Extensible Markup Language.

9. Method according to anyone of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** the common formats comprise at least elements, attributes and text.

10. Method according to claim 9, **characterized in that** the common format text is divided into string values and integer values.

11. Method according to claim 9 or 10, **characterized in that** the common formats further comprise namespace information (2).

12. Database model for mapping a hierarchical data format comprising descriptors (1, 10, 11) to a relational database management system, **characterized in that** it uses a method according to any of the preceding claims.

13. Apparatus for reading from and/or writing to recording media, **characterized in that** it uses a method according to any of claims 1-11 or a database model according to claim 12 for mapping a hierarchical data format comprising descriptors (1, 10, 11) to a relational database management system.